

# *Russian president congratulates Díaz-Canel and Raúl Castro, offers development assistance*

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Moscow, April 21 (RHC)-- Russian president Vladimir Putin spoke on the phone Friday with the first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party Raúl Castro, and with Cuba's new president Miguel Díaz-Canel, whom he offered assistance to implement the country's set economic and social development programs.

According to the Kremlin press service, during both phone conversations, the three dignitaries touched on the outcome of Cuba's general elections, particularly the installment of the XI legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power and the election of the new Council of State and head of government.

Both sides expressed a mutual interest in implementing bilateral projects in several fields, particularly energy, infrastructure and transport.

The Russian head of state also congratulated and thanked Raúl Castro for his personal contribution toward strengthening the strategic partnership between Russia and Cuba.

Putin, who welcomed then Cuban First Vice President Miguel Díaz-Canel, in May 2016, was one of the first world leaders to congratulate him Thursday on his election as the new head of state of the Caribbean

island nation.

The Russian leader sent a telegram, which read: "In Russia, we value highly our relations with Cuba, which are based on strong bonds of friendship and mutual respect."

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